

Application Ser. No.:10/512,010

Title: A DEVICE FOR CLEANING THE TEATS OF AN ANIMAL AND A MILKING STALL INCLUDING THE DEVICE

Response to Office Action dated: February 16, 2007

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Remarks

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated February 16, 2007. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claim 31 is allowed, and that claims 6, 20-22 and 35-37 present allowable subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 3 and 6, which have been cancelled, and thus it is submitted that claim 1 is now allowable, as well as those claims 2, 4-5, 7-11, 23-26, and 29-30 depending directly or indirectly therefrom. In addition, the first Office Action indicated that claims 20-22 presented allowable subject matter, and applicants have amended claim 12 to incorporate the limitations of claims 17 and 22, which as a result have been cancelled, and as such applicant submits that claims 12-16, 19 and 21-22 are now in condition for allowance. Applicant has also made certain typographical and grammatical changes to Claims 1, 29 and 31, and has also corrected Claim 15 to strike the word device which was not deleted in the previous amendment.

Claims 32-37 also remain in this application. Applicant appreciates the recognition that claims 35-37 present allowable subject matter. However, applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 32 also patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

In this regard, claim 32 is addressed to a device for cleaning the teats of an animal. In the Office Action of February 16, 2007, EP 0 207 572 to Van der Lely was cited in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,401,654 to Hallsten.

Van der Lely is arguably the most pertinent reference, in that it shows a set of cups which are a combination of teatcups and teat cleaning cups (teatcups being understood by those skilled in the art to refer to the attachments to the teats which perform the milking operation.) The cups are carried by a support 32 which is intended to be housed in a rest position beneath the floor on which the animal stands. When the cups are to be used for cleaning and milking, the set of cups are raised by means of the support 32 along a rod 31 up through the floor to be attached to the teats of the animal. Consequently, Van der Lely clearly does not disclose any carrying arrangement of the kind defined

in claim 32 of the present application. Especially so, in that no carrying arrangement including at least one rail and a carriage moveable along the rail, wherein the teat cleaning member is suspended from the carriage via a wire like member.

The Hallsten '654 patent is concerned with a teatcup holder rack. The holder rack is thus configured to hold four individual teatcups during the interval between milking operations. This is especially pertinent in distinguishing the present invention in that the holder rack is intended to hold four teatcups designed to permit automatic attachment of the teatcups by means of a robot arm. There is no disclosure in Hallsten of any teat cleaning cups for cleaning the teats of an animal to be milked, but there is a disclosure regarding a cleaning device for cleaning the teatcups. It is also to be noted that the arrangement disclosed in Hallsten is configured for so-called quarter milking, that is, each teatcup is connected to a milk-receiving container via an individual long milk conduit 11.

Furthermore, Hallsten does not disclose any carrying arrangement including a rail, and *a fortiori* no carriage movable along such a rail. Moreover, Hallsten does not disclose a teat cleaning member suspended from a carriage via a wire-like member.

In Hallsten '654, there is disclosed pneumatic cylinders 9, 13 and 13' which, via wires, are provided for different purposes. The wire 51 is connected to the teatcup holder rack for adjusting the position of the teatcup holder rack.

Consequently, even if one were to combine the teachings of Van der Lely with the Hallsten disclosure, the features claimed in claim 32 are not revealed. It would therefore not be obvious for one skilled in the art to combine these two references and arrive at the invention as claimed in claim 32. Even the application of hindsight gained by applicants' invention would not result in rendering claim 32 obvious.

Thus, applicant respectfully submits that the claims as now amended define over the prior art of record and place the application in condition for allowance. Such is courteously requested. Any additional fees necessitated by this submission may be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

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Any issues which may be resolved by a telephone conference may be addressed to the undersigned
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Respectfully submitted,

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